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ABSTRACT

THIS ARTICLE, THE FIRST OF THREE IN THE BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS' "CURRICULUM GUIDE NUMBER 6," EDITED BY SIRARPI OHANNESSIAN AND WILLIAM GAGE OF THE CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS, IS AN ATTEMPT "TO HELP BREAK THE LANGUAGE BARRIER" WHICH EXISTS FOR THE MANY CHOCTAW CHILDREN WHO LACK PROPER SKILL IN SPEAKING ENGLISH. SOME CHOCTAW CHILDREN KNOW NO ENGLISH UPON ENTERING SCHOOL; OTHERS KNOW A LITTLE, OR SPEAK IT AS A FIRST LANGUAGE LEARNED FROM CHOCTAW-SPEAKING PARENTS. FOR THESE CHILDREN IT IS NECESSARY, THE AUTHOR FEELS, TO TEACH ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE, EMPHASIZING THE ORAL SKILLS. THE SIMPLIFIED ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND CHOCTAW PRESENTED IN THIS PAPER CONTRASTS IMPORTANT FEATURES OF THE TWO LANGUAGES, AND POINTS OUT FOR THE CLASSROOM TEACHER CERTAIN SOUNDS AND GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES WHICH CAN BE EXPECTED TO BE THE MOST DIFFICULT FOR CHOCTAW STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH. FACIAL DIAGRAMS AND DETAILED EXPLANATIONS ILLUSTRATE HOW TO TEACH THE STUDENTS TO PRONOUNCE DIFFICULT SOUNDS. EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT PATTERN DRILLS, SOME OF WHICH MAY BE USED AS GAMES, ARE SUGGESTED FOR TEACHING DIFFICULT GRAMMAR POINTS. THIS PAPER IS PREFACED BY A DISCUSSION OF PROBLEMS PERTINENT TO SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING BY THE EDITORS, AND CONCLUDES WITH A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF REFERENCES OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO THE TEACHER. SEE RELATED DOCUMENTS AL 002 290 AND AL 002 291. (AMM)

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TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF CHOCTAW, NAVAJO AND PAPAGO

A Contrastive Approach

/Part I, English for Speakers of Choctaw/

INDIAN EDUCATION

Edited by

SIRARPI OHANNESSIAN

and

WILLIAM W. GAGE

AL 002 289

Prepared at the
CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS
for the
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

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A LETTER TO THE TEACHERS OF INDIAN CHILDREN

The Bureau of Indian Affairs is pleased to be able to make available the type of information that is contained in this Curriculum Bulletin. Teachers over the years have consistently asked for practical information about the language Indian children speak in the home. I believe the Center for Applied Linguistics has made a first vital step toward making it possible for us to respond to this request.

I would like to express my appreciation to Miss Sirarpi Ohannessian for her continued interest in the education of American Indian children. Her first effort, The Study of the Problems of Teaching English to American Indians, established a landmark in the study of language curriculum practices in Indian education. The contrastive articles which comprise this Bulletin resulted from a recommendation of the Study and represent another step the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian people have made to improve the education of Indian children.

May I encourage you to take an active interest in the articles and to use them as much as possible. If you have questions or comments about them, please feel free to write either to Miss Ohannessian or to me.

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FOREWORD

The present set of three articles* is an attempt to make available to teachers some of the results of a comparison of English with three American Indian languages: Choctaw, Navajo, and Papago. These languages were decided on in consultation with, and based on needs indicated by, the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Navajo was selected as the language that had the largest number of speakers and Choctaw as one on which help was especially needed by teachers. The third language indicated by the Bureau was Eskimo, but it was found that a Teacher's Guide for Teaching English to Native Children of Alaska on lines similar to those contemplated for the present series had already been prepared by members of the Summer Institute of Linguistics and edited by Donald H. Webster and Elliott Canonge. Therefore Papago was chosen instead.

Each of the articles in the present volume is based on existing studies of the specific Indian language, and represents the contribution of a scholar who has been involved in such study of the language. The Choctaw-English article is by Thurston Dale Nicklas of the University of Kansas. The Navajo-English article was planned in consultation with Oswald Werner of Northwestern University and was written by Dorothy A. Pedtke of the Center for Applied Linguistics in collaboration with Dr. Werner, who provided parts of the article. The Papago-English article is based on a paper specially prepared by Madeleine Mathiot of the State University of New York at Buffalo and adapted by Sirarpi Ohannessian to make it more accessible to the teacher who may have no training in linguistics.

The project was organized and carried out by the English for Speakers of Other Languages Program of the Center for Applied Linguistics under contract with the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the United States Department of the Interior.

*See also AL 002 290 and AL 002 291.

The Center wishes to express its thanks to the scholars that contributed to the volume and to the Bureau of Indian Affairs for its support of the project.

Sirarpi Ohannessian
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PREFACE

It is often easy to detect the native language of people from the way they speak English. Thus, when we hear people say "chop" instead of "shop"; "wreathing" instead of "reading"; when -s's disappear at the ends of certain nouns that should be in the plural; and the difference between "ship" and "sheep" cannot be determined from the vowel sound used, we may guess that they probably are speakers of Spanish. These are only a few examples of the typical "mistakes" that Spanish speakers make, and it would be easy to draw up similar lists for speakers of such languages as French, German, and Navajo who have not yet learned to speak English well. Indeed, it is equally easy to draw up such a list for Americans who are learning to speak French, German, Navajo, and so on. These "mistakes" occur not only at the level of pronunciation, but also in grammar and vocabulary.

A major reason for these "mistakes" seems to be that in learning a new language we tend to transfer to it the habits of hearing, understanding and producing the sounds, grammatical patterns and vocabulary system of our own language or the languages we already speak. Such transfer is often referred to as "interference" and may present a serious problem in learning a new language. Linguists maintain that the best way to deal with the problem of interference is to pinpoint specific areas of potential difficulty through a contrastive analysis of the target language and the language (or languages) that the learner already speaks. The assumption behind such an analysis is that since teaching a new language is always a question of teaching it to speakers of a specific language (or languages), an understanding of likely interference will help to make teaching much more efficient and effective by making it possible to organize it in such a way that emphasis is laid on areas that need most attention.

However, it may not always be possible to predict all interference problems, or which of them will present the greatest difficulty. For this reason it is necessary to observe the language behavior of learners

in order to find out which are the more persistent problems. But when once these are isolated and matched with the predicted areas of potential trouble, the contrastive study can be of very great help to the teacher.

The articles in this volume are based on the work of linguists who have studied, compared and contrasted the structures of English with those of Choctaw, Navajo and Papago. They are not, however, based on extensive observation of student behavior and they are not intended as guidelines for teaching procedure, though some suggestions for presentation of material have been included. They are, rather, intended to point out, in language that the teacher can understand, the areas of potential interference for speakers of Choctaw, Papago and Navajo in learning English. Teachers, therefore, should first ascertain whether the problems isolated in the articles are indeed those that their students face. If they are, the articles should be of great assistance in providing useful information on the causes of these problems and in providing useful information on the causes of these problems and in providing examples of material for additional class work in overcoming them. It remains for the teacher, when he has determined which problems need most attention, to decide on the actual techniques of presenting the material.

It is important for the teacher to bear in mind, however, that an intellectual understanding on the part of the student of differences between English and his own language and the problems these cause him in learning English will not necessarily result in his learning to use the language. A great deal of work is needed in practicing it in order to establish new habits which will help him use it with ease and near-native ability.

At present there is a great deal of interest and research in the process through which a child learns his first language, but there is little work as yet on how he acquires his second or third language. However, experience seems to indicate that children learn more easily than adults, and that practice, mimicry and, in the words of William A. Moulton, "the ability to see patterns, to make analogies, to build new forms on the basis of old ones", are involved in all language learning.

A great deal more seems to be involved in second language learning than overcoming problems of interference from the mother tongue. For instance, if a child says "He bringed the book", he is obviously using the analogy of the more usual way of forming the past tense in English, and "interference" here is not attributable to his native language. The attitude of students towards the new language, that of their community, the immediate and future importance of English for purposes of communication and advancement may all have an effect on how students learn English. One very important factor is the attitude of the teacher towards his students, towards the language he is teaching, and his ability to arouse interest and enthusiasm. All this is, of course, in addition to his familiarity with modern approaches to language teaching and his skill in classroom techniques.

The editors of this volume regard it as essential that the student be provided with extensive practice in overcoming his difficulties, that grammatical explanations be restricted to the clarification of special problems, and that the student be helped to learn the English language rather than about it. It is suggested that where possible the learning process take place in realistic situations in which English is used for communication. Even where mimicry and repetition are used, it is recommended that the work be varied and incorporated into meaningful activity. Presentation of material will vary according to the age and background of the student. It is assumed that, though oral work will form a very important part of the initial stages in teaching, reading and writing will not be neglected in subsequent stages but will receive equally careful attention.

The bibliography at the end of this volume is intended as a guide for further reading. Teachers are urged to consult the section on "The Teacher's Bookshelf" in English for American Indians (prepared by the Center for Applied Linguistics and published by the Bureau of Indian Affairs) as well as the bibliography listed, for books on methodology and further material on the English language.

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ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF CHOCTAW

By Thurston Dale Nicklas

English is a foreign language to many Choctaw children entering the schools. Some of them know no English, since Choctaw is spoken at home, at church, and in fact, in all social situations the child participates in. Other children have had the opportunity to learn some English, but Choctaw remains their primary language. Other Choctaw children speak English as their primary language, although Choctaw is the first language of their parents. The reason is that their parents were themselves frustrated in their attempts to get an education by the language barrier, and they don't want their children to suffer the same frustration. So they speak only English in the home. Children from these homes may retain some of the "Choctaw accent" of their parents. All such children are to some degree disadvantaged in our highly competitive society, and in the schools, because of their lack of proper skill in speaking English.

This article is an attempt to help break this language barrier. It takes the position that for these children, English should be taught as a second language. That is, before we try to teach them to read and write English, we must teach them to speak English.

To construct a program for teaching a second language, it is advantageous to make an analysis of the sounds and grammars of the language to be taught and the native language of the learner. Such an analysis will point out just what traits of the foreign language can be expected to be the most difficult for the student to learn. Special drills and exercises can be constructed for teaching these trouble spots. The bulk of this paper presents an analysis of Englist and Choctaw for these purposes, suggesting drills for use in the classroom.

Comparing Sounds and Grammar

Although each language has its own system of sounds, and its own grammar, much of the grammar and sounds of any language is common

to all languages. Thus, Choctaw speakers "know" a lot of English grammar since it is the same as Choctaw grammar. For example, in both English and Choctaw, transitive clauses have subjects, predicates, and direct objects. Since English is like Choctaw in this respect, this clause pattern does not have to be taught to the Choctaw child; he already knows it.

However, in some respects the grammars of English and Choctaw are different. For example, in English most nouns have two forms, a singular and a plural. Choctaw nouns have only a single form. Thus, in learning English, the Choctaw speaker must learn to use plural endings; his tendency will be to omit them. Special exercises will be needed to teach the plural ending.

Similar remarks can be made about the sounds of English and Choctaw. Choctaws will have no difficulty speaking English sounds that are very similar to those they use in Choctaw; but they will have difficulty learning English sounds which are quite unlike those in Choctaw. By comparing the sound systems, we can predict to some extent just what English sounds will be the most troublesome and design exercises to help the Choctaw child overcome his difficulties.

Just a note: since we are comparing English to Choctaw, we will be mainly pointing out areas in which English is more complicated than Choctaw. This may give the illusion that Choctaw is a very simple language. If we were to compare Choctaw to English, we would be pointing out the areas in which Choctaw was more complicated than English, and English would seem to be a very simple language. Actually, both languages are very complicated, but they are complicated in different areas of grammar.

The Sounds of English and Choctaw

In comparing the sounds of English with those of Choctaw, we want to ask a question about each English sound, which will show us the points at which a Choctaw speaker will experience difficulty. The question is:

"Does Choctaw have a very similar sound?"

If the answer is "yes," then the Choctaw speaker will have no difficulty with this particular sound, since he has learned to hear and produce it in speaking Choctaw. If the answer is "no," on the

other hand, the Choctaw speaker will tend to hear the unusual English sound as one of his accustomed Choctaw sounds, and when he speaks, he will substitute this Choctaw sound for the English sound, giving his speech a Choctaw accent. To overcome this accent problem, we will need special drills.

A second question we will want to ask is:

"Supposing English and Choctaw have a very similar sound; does this sound occur in the same place in words in Choctaw as in English?"

Again, if the answer is "yes," then the Choctaw speaker will have no new habits to learn. However, if an English sound occurs some place in a word where the corresponding Choctaw sound does not occur, then the Choctaw speaker will have trouble pronouncing the sound in that position. For example, in English, m may end a word, as in come, or Sam. In Choctaw, m never ends a word. Consequently, the Choctaw speaker will have some difficulty pronouncing word final m.

In what follows, we will first compare the consonants and vowels of English and Choctaw, to determine what the trouble spots will be. Then we will discuss the distributional differences between Choctaw and English sounds. A means is provided for teaching each trouble spot, when it is discussed. Finally, there is a discussion of some types of games and exercises that can be used for practicing the trouble spot sounds.

Note: It is very important at all stages to allow and encourage your students to imitate what you say.

The Consonants Which Are Most Similar

The following consonant sounds are almost identical in English and Choctaw, and should not present difficulties to the Choctaw speaker.

p t ch k b s sh m n l h w y

If the Choctaw speaker simply pronounces these sounds as he does in Choctaw, he will have a quite acceptable pronunciation, except for a variety of t and d, which is discussed under Miscellaneous Problems.

Consonants Which Are Similar in English and Choctaw

There are two additional consonants in English which, though absent in Choctaw, have very similar counterparts in Choctaw. In fact, especially in the speech of young people in some areas, the English

sounds have come to replace the Choctaw sounds in some positions in words.

One of these English sounds is f. Choctaw also has an f-like sound, but it is pronounced slightly differently. Say "funny," and notice that when you articulate the f, you do so by bringing the lower lip into contact with the upper teeth, as in Diagram 1.

The Choctaw f, as in fani 'squirrel' is different from the English f in that the lower lip is brought not against the upper teeth, but against the upper lip as in Diagram 2. The result is an f-like sound very similar to the sound made when blowing out a match.

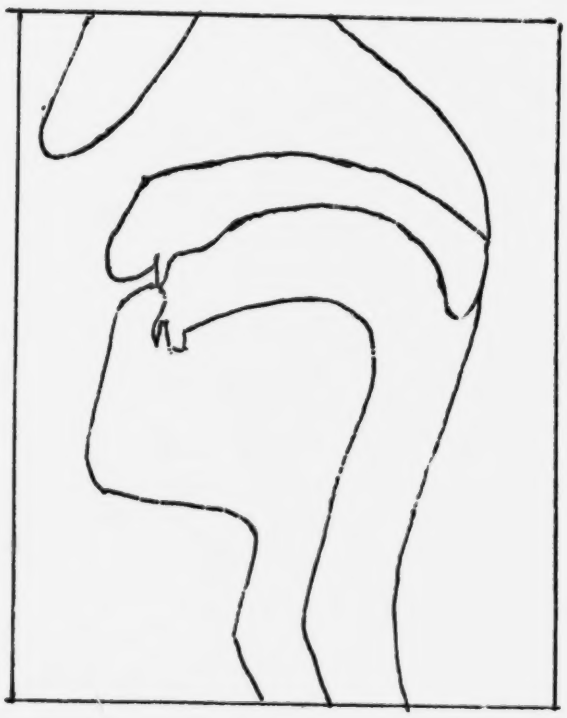

Diagram 1. English f.

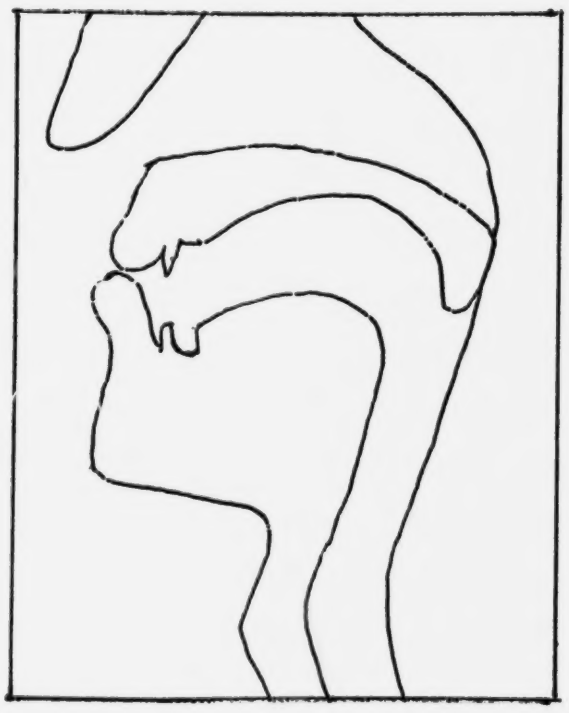

Diagram 2. Choctaw f.

If your students live in an area where English f has replaced original Choctaw f in Choctaw, then f presents no learning problem. Otherwise, you will need to teach English f to your pupils, since Choctaw f frequently sounds like fw, and would result in a "foreign" accent in their English.

In order to get your students to hear the difference between the two f's, you can describe the difference to them. Or better, if you can pronounce Choctaw f, you can say a word like "funny" with Choctaw f, then with English f pointing out the difference, which they will be able to see. To learn to pronounce Choctaw f, get a speaker of

Choctaw to teach you to say fani 'squirrel', and ofi 'dog'. An alternate approach would be to say "funny", pointing out how the lower lip touches the upper teeth, and then let the students practice it with mirrors, so they can see whether their own lips are touching their teeth.

A second basic technique would be to pronounce some Choctaw words using English f. Since these words will sound to Choctaw speakers as though they were spoken with an accent, the students will be made aware of the difference between the two f's. Some good words to use are:

fani 'squirrel'
ofi 'dog'
fala 'blackbird'
fowi 'bee'
kofi 'guinea fowl'

Once the students are aware of the differences between these sounds, one or another of the drills or exercises or games may be used to practice correct pronunciation.

The other English sound with a close Choctaw counterpart is θ (theta), the th sound of think or thud, as opposed to the th sound of the or though. The similar Choctaw sound is ɬ written by the Choctaws as hl, or lh, or thl. This sound is pronounced much like an l sound. Look at Diagram 3. This sound is made by putting the tongue against the ridge behind the teeth as in pronouncing t in two; but one or both sides of the tongue are left open, just enough that some air can hiss out; so only the tip of the tongue (and possibly one edge) is in actual contact with the roof of the mouth. The result sounds something like sl to speakers of English. It can be heard in the following Choctaw words.

ɬamko 'strong'
okchaɬɬa 'blackbird'
waɬána 'horsefly'

When the Choctaw hears English θ it sounds like ɬ to him, and he will use ɬ in speaking English, so he will say ɬink instead of think, unless he lives in an area in which θ has replaced ɬ in Choctaw.

To teach θ, we can use the same basic approach that we used to teach f. Describe the pronunciation of θ, in Diagram 4. To pronounce θ (th), you bring the tip of the tongue against the edge of the upper front teeth, letting the air pass out between the teeth, or between

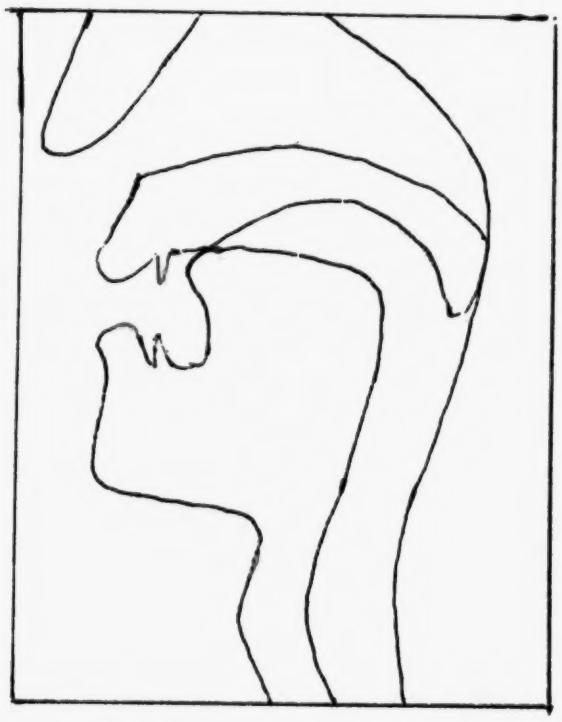

Diagram 3. Choctaw ł; only the tip of the tongue is touching the roof of the mouth.

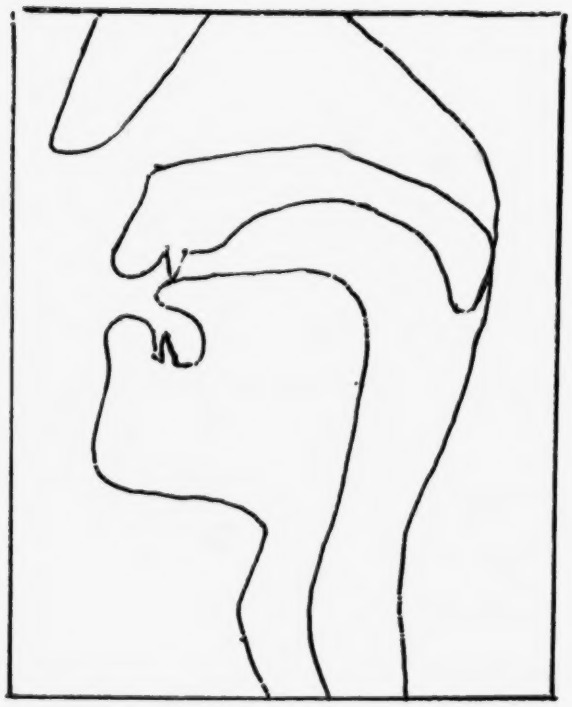

Diagram 4. English θ

the tongue tip and the edge of the teeth. Since this sound, like f, is pronounced at the front of the mouth, mirrors would be helpful to let the pupils see their own articulations.

The second approach is to say some Choctaw word with ł, but using θ instead of ł (łamko, wałána, okchałła are good words to use). This should help make Choctaw speakers aware of the difference between θ and ł.

Once your pupils have become aware of the differences between θ and ł, and can say θ, you can use some of the exercises, drills, and games described below.

Sounds Lacking in Choctaw: The Voiced Stops

One class of consonants found in all known languages are the stops. These are consonants which at some point in their articulation completely stop the flow of air from the mouth. Examples of stops are p, t, k, and b. The ch sound can also be considered a stop, since it is formed from the stop t followed by sh.

Voiced Voiceless	b d j g p t ch k	b p t ch k
	English Stops	Choctaw Stops

Diagram 5

There are two main varieties of stops in English and Choctaw: the voiced stops and the voiceless stops (Diagram 5). The voiceless stops of English are p, t, ch, k; the voiced stops are b, d, j, and g. The main difference is that the voiced stops have voice or vibration of the vocal chords -- humming -- during part of their articulation. Compare k and g in beaker and bigger, or in beak and big. If you hold your fingers against your Adam's apple, you will feel the vibration of the vocal chords in g, but not in k.

Now if we examine the English stops, we will see that they come in pairs; for each voiceless stop there is a voiced stop. Choctaw has only the single voiced stop b, corresponding to p, as in bala 'bean'

and pala 'lamp', bila 'grease' and pila 'to throw' and aba 'up, 'above', and apa 'to eat'; it lacks d, j, and g. These three sounds -- d, j, and g, -- will be a learning problem for the Choctaw speaker. He will tend to hear the voiced sounds as voiceless t, ch, k. That is, he will not at first hear the difference.

The first step is to help the students hear the difference between the pairs t-d, ch-j, k-g. One way is to begin with pairs of words which have the p-b difference already common to Choctaw speakers, describing the difference between p and b. Then give pairs with t-d, ch-j, and k-g. For example, begin with the words pump and bump, then tump and dump, chump, jump. The idea is to get across the parallel of pump-bump and tump-dump, etc. Use several pairs, such as pole-bowl, coal-goal, chip-jip, tip-dip, and so forth. Alternately, give the series of pump-tump-chump, bump-dump-jump, first giving all the voiceless sounds, then the voiced sounds. Use series with the stops in final position also: rope-robe, rote-road, etc. Be sure to explain just which sounds they are to be listening to.

Your students may be quietly imitating what you say. Encourage this imitation; it seems that the attempt to imitate a sound is a help in learning to hear it. You can aid their attempts to pronounce by giving pointers about articulation. For example, d may be explained as: (1) put your tongue as if to say t in tump; (2) hold the t, and start to hum, saying the whole word. The "hummed t" is d.

Also use a pair of words with the t-d at the end. Say ate slowly, with your fingers on your Adam's apple. As you say a, you will feel your voice box vibrating. When you say the t of ate, the vibration stops. Now slowly, say ate, but this time, keep the voice box vibrating when you articulate the t -- resulting in d.

These articulatory hints might be tried with p and b first, so that the student learns to "feel" the voiced-voiceless distinction in sounds he already knows.

Sounds Lacking in Choctaw: The Voiced Fricatives

A second class of sounds common in languages is the fricatives, sounds formed not by stopping the flow of air through the mouth, but by merely obstructing the air flow, causing friction and turbulence. Examples of fricatives are f, θ, s, sh.

Voiceless Voiced	f θ s sh v ð z zh	f ɬ s sh
	English Fricatives	Choctaw Fricatives

Diagram 6.

The English fricatives appear in Diagram 6. English has the four voiceless fricatives f, θ, s, sh, and for each of these a corresponding voiced fricative v, ð, z, zh. Of these, ð is the sound of the th of the, they, that, and so forth. Contrast this with the voiceless θ of think. The zh is the voiced sh, and is found represented by s in pleasure, leisure, and by ge in one pronunciation of garage (garazh, not garaj) and beige (beizh, not beij).

Assuming that your students have learned English f and θ, the only English fricatives they will have to learn are the voiced ones. To teach these sounds, we want to begin again to enable the students to hear the difference between the voiced fricatives and the voiceless ones, and provide hints about how to pronounce them.

To make your students aware of the difference between these pairs, f-v, θ-ð, s-z, sh-zh. The difference between voiced and voiceless sounds may be made clear by using pairs of words with p and b, such as pile-bile, pole-bowl, pump-bump, and describing the difference in terms of vibrations in the voice box, as explained in the previous section. If the voiced stops have already been drilled, any of the pairs t-d, k-g, ch-j will do as well. Then move to a pair of words with f-v, s-z differences, such as file-vile, sue-zoo, sing-zing, see-ze (the name of the letter), peace-peas, price-prize, etc. Students should be able to transfer their hearing and production of the voiced-voiceless distinction of stops to the fricatives.

An alternate method is based on the observation that people can often imitate a sound offered as onomatopoetic, but cannot if it is offered as a speech sound. In particular, your students might be able to say zzzzzz in imitation of a bee, before they can say z as an English

speech sound. To make use of this possibility, begin by having your students say zzzzzz. Then add oo after a pause; zzzzzz, pause, oo. Then gradually decrease the length of the pause, until they are saying zzzzzzoo. Then begin decreasing the length of the z, until zoo is the result. When they can say zoo, contrast the z with the s in sue, having them listen and repeat zoo-sue-zoo.... When they have learned the voiced z, you can then go to voiced v, zh, using the known pair s-z to introduce f-v, sh-zh.

English Sounds Lacking in Choctaw: The NG Sound

English has three nasal sounds: the m of man and ham, the n of new and pan and the ng of hang, sing, singer. This last nasal, ng, is written ŋ (n with the tail of a g) by linguists. This is also the sound of n before k: sink or siŋk, thank or thaŋk. It must be distinguished from the ng of finger and anger, which have ŋ followed by hard g: fing-ger or fiŋger.

Choctaw has these three sounds also, but ŋ in Choctaw is simply an automatic pronunciation of n before k. So the Choctaw will have no difficulty pronouncing ŋ in sink or thank, but he will have difficulty pronouncing ŋ elsewhere, as in sing and singer.

The strategy for teaching ŋ relies on its familiar use before k. The idea is to select a pair such as think and thing (thiŋk, thiŋ), or sinker singer (siŋker, siŋer), and begin with the first word, gradually dropping off the k until only the ŋ remains. Begin with think, for instance. Then prolong the ŋ and say thiŋŋŋk. When the ŋ is fairly long, drop off the k: thiŋŋŋŋ. Do the same with siŋker-siŋŋŋker-siŋŋŋer.

Sounds Lacking in Choctaw: r

One final sound lacking in Choctaw is r. Since this has a vocalic nature, we will postpone talking about it until we come to the vowels.

Miscellaneous Problems

The stops t and d pose special problems, when they occur between vowels. Two possibilities occur. In precise speech, t is pronounced t, and d is pronounced d as in writer and rider. However in casual conversational speech, both t and d are pronounced as a sound we can write D, so that rider and writer both sound like riDer. Compare also the casual pronunciation of latter-ladder, budder-butter, heeder-heater, heeded-heated, and so forth. If these t's and d's were

always pronounced distinctly, one's speech would sound overprecise. So D is an additional sound we need to teach.

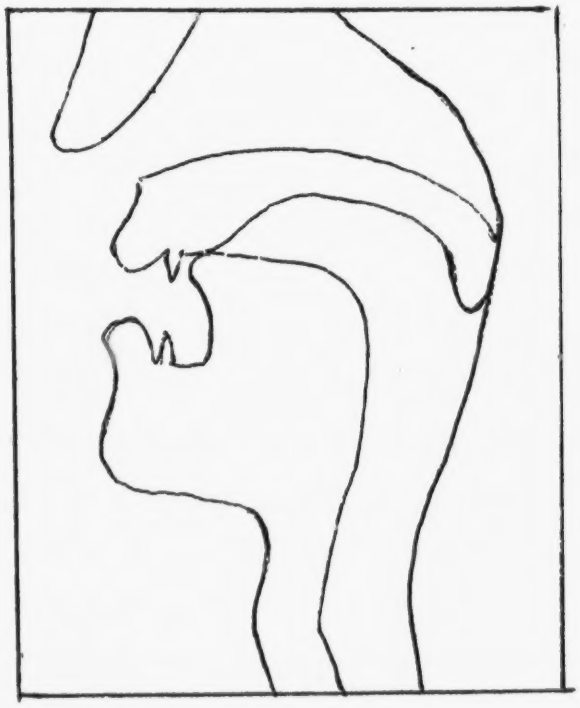

Diagram 7. English d and t

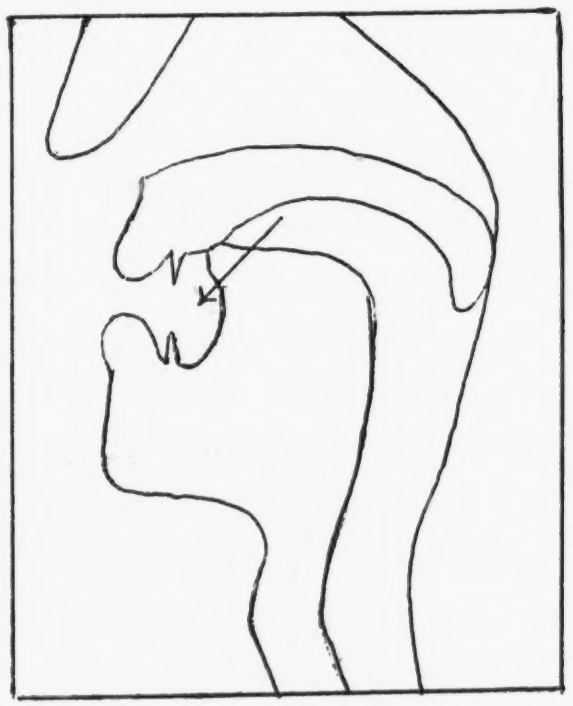

Diagram 8. English D in body

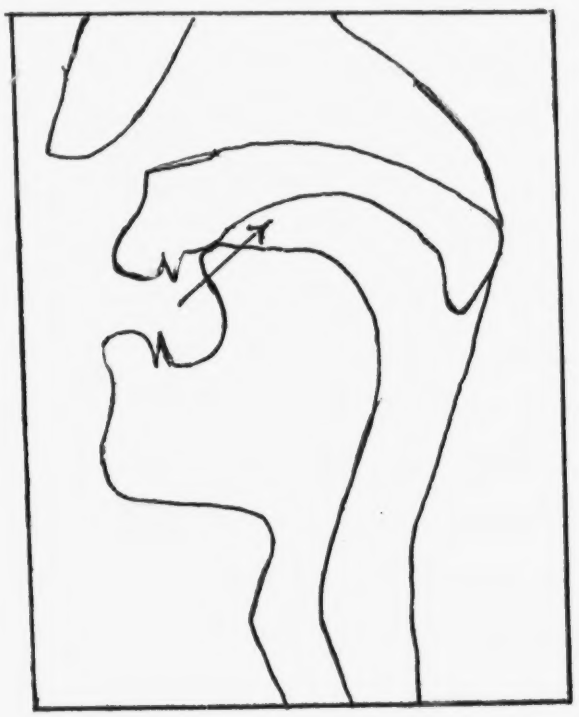

Diagram 9. English D in wriDer

One might begin by explaining that in slow, careful speech one uses t in writer, heater, heated, butter, and d in rider, heeded, budder, ladder, but that in normal speech one uses "quick-t" and quick-d", which sound just alike. Give an example like writer-riDer-rider.

The articulation of D can be explained as "like d", but much quicker, like slapping the roof of the mouth, instead of pressing against it as for d. That is, D is voiced, like d, not voiceless like t; but it isn't a complete stop as d is; rather, the tongue is brought into contact with the ridge behind the teeth, and immediately pulled away, in a slap-like motion (Diagrams 7,8,9). If the vowel after D is a back vowel (as described in the section on vowels) as in wriDer, the tongue is flapped in a backwards motion. Otherwise, the tongue is flapped with a forward motion, as in boDy.

The Vowels Which Are Nearly Identical

To understand the vowel systems of Choctaw and English, we need to first get some idea about how vowels are formed in the mouth.

Consider the vowel sounds i of machine, u of rude, and a of father. (We will always use i, a, u, to represent these sounds.) Say first the i, then the a. You will see that when you say i, the front of the tongue body (the main part of the tongue behind the moveable tip) is raised near the ridge behind the teeth. When you say a, the tongue body is depressed against the floor of the mouth. Hence, we can say that i is a high (tongue position) vowel, and a is a low (tongue position) vowel.

Now compare u with a. When you pronounce the sound u, the back of the tongue is raised against the soft palate. So u is also a high (tongue position) vowel.

Next, compare i with u. If you say these alternately, you will feel your tongue moving back for u and to the front for i. Hence, i is called a front vowel, and u is called a back vowel; a with a central position is called a central vowel.

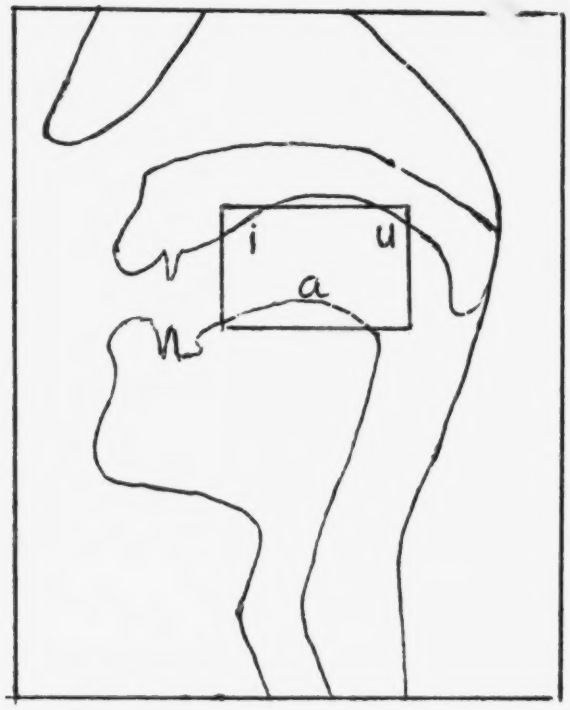

Diagram 10.
The three vowels i, a, u

Compare these remarks with Diagram 10. Inside the oral cavity we have marked the tongue positions for the vowels i, u, a. The ideal space in which vowels can be articulated is enclosed in a rectangle. This rectangle, changed to form a square, appears in Diagram 11, with the positions labeled and additional vowel symbols included.

i ɪ		u ʊ	High
e ɛ	ə	o	Mid
æ	a	ɔ	Low
Front	Central	Back	

Diagram 11.
The English Vowels

Since English spelling is highly irregular with respect to the spelling of vowel sounds, it is convenient to use a single symbol consistently for each vowel sound. The symbols for the vowels in

Diagram 11 are those needed for English. The list below explains what each symbol stands for:

i the i of machine
ɪ the i of pit
e the e of they
ɛ the e of pet
æ the a of pat
ə the a of sofa or
  the u of butter
a the a of father
u the u of rude
ʊ the u of put
o the o of go
ɔ the aw of law

As you can determine by testing yourself, high vowels are pronounced with a higher tongue position than mid vowels; and mid vowels are pronounced with a higher tongue position than low vowels. The central words are pronounced with the tongue in a "neutral" position; the front vowels are pronounced with the tongue more to the front; the back vowels are pronounced with the tongue farther back.

Notice that the semi-vowels y and w are very much like the vowels i and u, respectively. When you pronounce the word you, your tongue starts in a position just a bit higher than the position for i; the same relation holds between w and u. So y is a high front semi-vowel, and w is a high back semi-vowel.

In some of the boxes of the diagram, there are two vowels. Thus, there are the pairs i-ɪ, e-ɛ, and u-ʊ. The first of each of these pairs is followed by a semi-vowel. That is, i is really pronounced iy, e is really pronounced ey, and u is really pronounced uw. You can test this by saying the vowel i as in 'he' hi slowly. As you pronounce the vowel, you will feel your tongue rising higher to the y position. Or say 'they', and you will feel your tongue move from the mid position of "pure" e to the high close position of y. If you say 'who' hu, you can

feel your lips becoming more tightly rounded for the w position, whereas they are not so tightly rounded for u. Thus, i, e, and u, the "unpure" vowels, might as well be written iy, ey, and uw.

The vowel æ also has an "unpure" pronunciation before g or ng. If you compare 'sack' sæk with 'sag' sæg, you will hear a y semi-vowel after æ in sæg, but not in sæk. The same is true of 'sam' sæm and 'sang' sæŋ. So before g and ŋ, æ might be written æy: sæyg, sæyŋ.

The vowels ɪ, ɛ, æ, a, ə, and ɔ are, on the other hand, "pure" vowels, since they are not normally accompanied by a semi-vowel.

Now let's consider what the English speaker must listen for to understand a word. If he wants to determine what vowel the speaker is using, he will ask about the quality of the vowel: "Is it high, low, or mid? Is it front, central, or back? Is it 'pure' or 'unpure'?"

If we examine the Choctaw vowel system, we find that the Choctaw must ask a different set of questions about vowel sounds, and so he listens for a different set of vowel properties. This will result in difficulty in hearing and pronouncing the English vowels.

High	i ii		o oo
Low		a aa	
	Front	Central	Back

Diagram 12. The Choctaw Vowels

A principle used to distinguish the Choctaw vowels is not quality--but quantity, the length of time taken to pronounce a sound. (Cf. Diagram 12.) Choctaw does have three vowel qualities i, a, o which are very much like the corresponding vowels of English; but each of these qualities may also be long (ii, aa, oo). So Choctaw speakers besides listening for the widely different qualities i, a, o also listen for quantity. That is, the difference between ii and i that the Choctaw is the most aware of is the difference in length: ii is held twice as long as i. Likewise, the difference between aa and a, and oo and o that a Choctaw speaker is most aware of is length. Any qualitative differences between a long vowel and its corresponding short vowel are incidental and below the level of conscious awareness.

Long	Short
ii	i ɪ
oo	o ʊ
aa	a ə

Diagram 13.

However, there are qualitative differences too (Cf. Diagram 13). A short i, a, o has its basic sound wherever it ends a syllable (when it comes before the combination consonant + vowel). In addition, a and o have their basic sounds before any k or h. In any other circumcumstance, however, i, a, and o are pronounced much more like ɪ, ə, and ʊ. The Choctaw speaker alternates between these two pronunciations of the short vowels quite automatically, and is not even aware that a difference exists. All he has to listen for is length, high or low, front or back.

Given this background, what can a Choctaw speaker be expected to "hear" when he listens to English? Since the difference between short a and ə is automatic in his language, he does not have to listen for it; all he must note is whether it is a central vowel and whether it is short. He will listen for the same thing in English, and so will lump English a and ə together as short a, using a before k, and in open syllables; and ə elsewhere. That is, he will not easily hear the difference between 'lock' lak and 'luck' lək; he will instead interpret this according to the rules of his own language, and hear lak in both cases; he will also say lak in both cases.

Analogous remarks can be made for the pairs of English sounds i, ɪ and o, ʊ in at least some word positions (especially before voiceless sounds and in fast speech), when they will tend to be lumped together as short o and i.

In summary, then, we can say that the speaker of Choctaw will experience difficulties with the English vowels ɔ and æ and u and ɛ and e, which are totally lacking in his language; and he will have to learn to hear and produce a qualitative difference between i and ɪ, u and ʊ, a and ə. The paragraphs below offer some hints about how to teach these vowels.

The Vowel e: A Partial Problem

The English vowel e, or ey, has a near correspondent in Choctaw which will serve perfectly well as ey. This is Choctaw short a followed by y, followed by another consonant. That is, ay + consonant is pronounced ey + consonant, in Choctaw. So words such as 'bake' bek and 'bases' besəz present no problem, since the Choctaw will hear these as Choctaw bayk and baysaz, and pronounce them accordingly.

There will be some problem with final e, however, as in 'they' ðe and 'hay' he. The Choctaw ey sound occurs only before a consonant, while in English it may occur at the end of a word. So the Choctaw speaker may have difficulty pronouncing this at the end of a word.

To teach word-final e, select a word like 'bake' bek. Repeat it several times, each time holding the e a little longer: bek, beek, beeyyk, etc. Then drop off the final consonant beeyy. When this is mastered, shorten the ey to normal length: bey 'bay'.

Teaching i and ɪ

Give pairs of words that illustrate the difference: 'beat' bit, and 'bit' bɪt, 'ream' rim and 'rim' and rɪm; 'beater' bitər and 'bitter' bɪtər. Say a pair several times, encouraging your students to imitate you, until you think that they have begun to hear and pronounce the difference. At this stage, be careful not to prolong the i sound; just say the words at a normal rhythm. The reason for this caution is that under careful speech, English i becomes lengthened, while English ɪ remains relatively short; under these conditions the Choctaw speaker will automatically rely on the length difference, whereas we want him to learn the quality difference. The greatest difficulty will be to pronounce ɪ before a single consonant followed by a vowel, as in 'slipper' slɪpər. The Choctaw will tend to use i, saying slipər 'sleeper'. To teach ɪ in this position, take a word like slɪpər and begin saying it with a long p: slɪppppər; that is, hold the p for a bit. If you do that, the Choctaw speaker will automatically use ɪ instead of i, since the long pppp will be heard as a series of p's. Gradually reduce the length of the p, until you are saying normal slɪpər. Repeat this drill with other words.

Teaching o and ʊ

The method of teaching the difference between o and ʊ parallels that for teaching i and ɪ. Give pairs of words to illustrate the

difference, such as 'book' buk; 'poke' pok; 'put' put; 'boat' bot; 'pull' pul, 'pole' pol; 'hooking' hukiŋ;'poking' pokiŋ. Repeat each pair several times, encouraging your students to imitate you. Be careful to speak at a normal rate of speech. If you speak slowly, you will tend to lengthen the o sound more than the ʊ sound (as explained above for i and ɪ), and your students will respond to this difference in length rather than the qualitative difference.

The greatest difficulty will be pronouncing ʊ before k, and before a single consonant followed by a vowel. For example, 'hook' huk will tend to be pronounced hok 'hoke'. To counteract this tendency, the first step is to teach ʊ in isolation. To do this, take a word like 'foot' fut, and say it by prolonging the ʊ: fuuut. Then drop off the f: uuut; and the t: uuuuu. When your students can control ʊ in isolation, introduce h and k in turn: uuuuu, huuu, huuuk; then pronounce at normal length: huk 'hook'.

To teach ʊ before a single consonant followed by a vowel, use the same technique described for ɪ in the same word position. Select a word with the necessary sounds, such as 'footed', futəd, 'hooded', hudəd. Say the word with a short ʊ and a prolonged consonant: hudddəd. It will be natural to most Choctaw to pronounce ʊ in this position, since the prolonged consonant will be heard as two consonants, and native Choctaw ʊ usually occurs before two consonants. When you have succeeded with hudddəd, begin to reduce the length of the consonant, until a normal pronunciation is achieved: hudddəd, huddəd, hudəd.

Teaching a and ə

The problem with these sounds is identical to that of o and ʊ; that is, to the Choctaw short a and ə are the "same sound", with a before k or a single consonant followed by a vowel, and ə elsewhere.

To teach the difference between a and ə, give pairs of words which contain these vowels: 'hot' hat, 'hut' hət; 'knot' nat, 'nut' nət; 'cot' kat. 'cut' kət; 'body' badi. 'buddy' bədi; 'knotty' nati, 'nutty' nəti. Again, be careful to speak at a normal rate; if you speak slowly, the a sound will be lengthened, and your students will simply respond to the length difference of aa to ə, rather than to the qualitative difference of a to ə.

As with o and u, it will likely be necessary to practice ə before k, since ə is always replaced by a before k in Choctaw. Using the same technique, first teach your students to control ə in isolation. To do this, repeat a word like nət 'nut', gradually holding the ə longer: nət, nəət, nəəəət. Then drop off the n and the t; nəəəət, əəəət, əəəə. When your students control ə in isolation, add l in front and k in back: əəəə, ləəəə, ləəəək. Then reduce the length of the ə: ləək, lək, 'luck'. This word lək can be contrasted with lak, 'lock', to test your students' ability to hear and pronounce the difference.

Before the combination consonant + vowel, ə will tend to be heard and spoken as a: 'puppy' and 'poppy' will both tend to be pronounced papi. To teach ə in this position, say your practice word with a long consonant: pəppppi. The prolonged consonant will sound like a double p, two p's, to the Choctaw speaker; it is natural to him to use ə before two consonants, so he should have no trouble saying pəppppi. Then gradually reduce the length of the p until you are speaking the word normally: pəpppi, pəppi, pəpi. For additional practice, contrast pəpi 'puppy', with papi 'poppy'.

Teaching ɔ

The Choctaw language has no sound like ɔ, the vowel of 'law', 'bought'. In learning this sound, your students will have to begin from scratch. For teaching ɔ, rely on imitation and contrast with a and o.

Teaching æ

The sound æ of kæt 'cat' is another sound lacking in Choctaw. To teach this sound, say some words containing æ: kæt 'cat', hæt 'hat', mæp 'map', lædər 'ladder', etc. Compare it with a and e: kat 'cot', kæt 'cat', ket 'Kate', etc.

Some hints can be given about its pronunciation. If your students can watch you closely as you alternate kat kæt, they will be able to see your tongue move forward for æ, backwards for a. If mirrors are available, this will allow them to see their own tongues as they try to pronounce æ. Or if you compare e with æ, as in ket kæt, they can see your jaw drop for æ and raise for e. This they should be able to imitate.

Teaching ɛ

This is another sound which is common in English, but totally lacking in many Choctaw dialects. To teach it, one can make use of a prior learning of æ. The technique is the same as that used to teach ɔ. Pronounce some words like pɛt 'pet', lɛtəs 'lettuce', sɛt 'set', contrasting these with æ, pæt 'pat', and e 'pate' pet, etc. Say e, and gradually slur it to æ. You will find that there is a stage in the slur which is very similar to ɛ: eeeeɛɛɛɛæææææ. When your students can imitate the slur, leave off the æ: eeeeɛɛɛɛ; finally, prolong ɛ, leaving off the e: eeeeɛɛɛɛɛɛ, ɛɛɛɛ, ɛɛɛɛ. When your students can control ɛ in isolation, reintroduce it into words: pɛt, sɛt, lɛtəs, pɛk, lɛtər, etc.

Teaching u

The difficulty of pronouncing this sound will depend on the Choctaw dialect of your students. Some dialects have borrowed the English word 'use' yuz, as yuusa. If your students speak such a dialect, they are familiar with the u sound already.

If your students do not speak such a dialect, they will have to be taught u. To do this, we will take advantage of the relationship between u and w. Select a word like 'week' wik beginning in w. Gradually lengthen the w until you are holding it quite long: wik, wwik, wwwik, wwwwik. This lengthened w sound is almost identical with u. To isolate it, simply drop off the rest of the word: wwwwik, wwwwi, wwww.... This wwww will be uuuu. When your students can pronounce u in isolation, reintroduce it in words, contrasting it with o: gu 'goo', go 'go'; rud 'rude', rod "road"; hup 'hoop', hop 'hope', etc.

A Special Problem: r and ər

Two vowel-like sounds have been left until last, since they are complex in their formation. One of these is the r sound of 'run' rən, 'break' brek, 'core' kor, etc. The other is the ər sound as in hər 'her', bərd 'bird', bɪgər 'bigger', tərtəl 'turtle', etc. The same relation exists between ər and r as between i and y or u and w. That is ər is a vowel sound, while r is a semi-vowel.

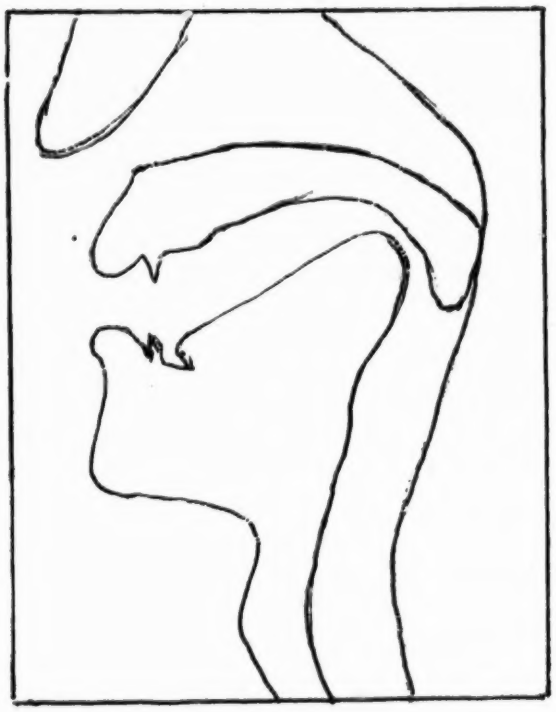

Diagram 14.
English u of 'booed'

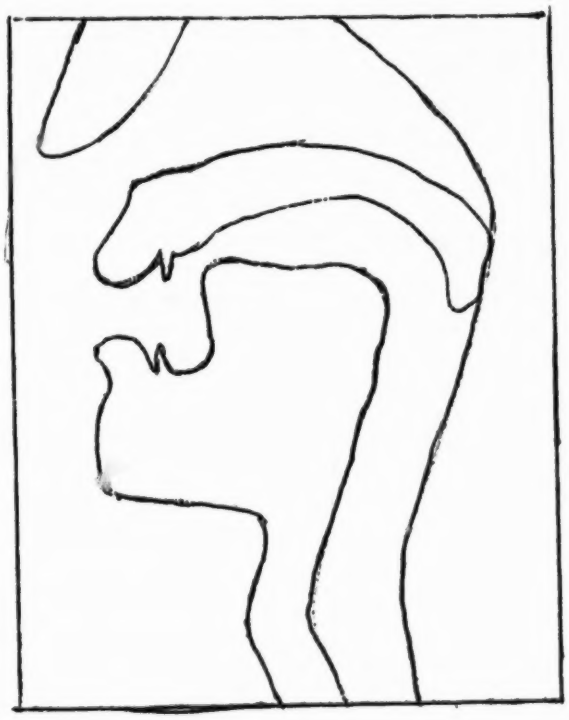

Diagram 15.
English ər of 'bird'

To teach ər, begin by illustrating it in some words: bətər 'butter', 'heard' hərd, bərd 'bird'. Contrast it with u and i: 'bead' bid, 'bird' bərd, 'booed' bud; 'hurt' hərt, 'hoot' hut, 'heat' hit; 'slurp' slərp, 'sloop' slup, 'sleep' slip.

To teach the consonant r, which is the semi-vowel form of ər, we will make use of our knowledge of ər. To teach r in any position, say it first long - that is, say it as a vowel ər: ərərərərən. Then gradually reduce its length until it is the normal r: ərərərən, ərərən, ərən, rən 'run'. Do the same exercise in other positions, as in 'brother', 'spray', etc.

Problems in Distribution

The differences between English and Choctaw sounds we have been discussing could be called differences in inventory of sounds -- "What sounds does English have that Choctaw lacks?" There are other kinds of differences, however, which can be called distributional differences. A distributional difference exists when a sound of one language can occur in a position in a word where it can't occur in the other language. For example, m may occur finally in English, as in 'room', but

it cannot in Choctaw. A Choctaw speaker learning English must learn to use m in a new distribution.

Some new distributions are easily learned, while others are more difficult. English consonant sequences which are likely to be difficult for Choctaw speakers are those which occur at the beginning of words, especially s followed by a consonant (k, t, l, n, f, p, m, pl, tr) and l or r preceded by a consonant (t, p, g, k, f, b).

To teach tr, pr, kr, fr, br, etc., select a practice word containing this sequence, say 'gray' gre. Say it slowly, making the r vocalic ər: gəre. This should not be difficult for students who have otherwise mastered ər and r. Then gradually shorten the ər until it merges with r: gre. Repeat this exercise with pr, kr, etc., if necessary.

A similar technique can be used to teach pl, kl, etc. Select a practice word containing the sequence, such as 'place' ples. Insert a long ə between the two consonants, then gradually shorten the ə until it disappears: pəəəles, pəəles, pəles, ples. Repeat this with the other combinations if necessary.

Teaching s + consonant will vary in difficulty depending on the dialect of the Choctaw speaker. In many dialects, a word beginning is + consonant may optionally lose its initial i, and be pronounced s + consonant. Speakers of these dialects should have no difficulty with s + consonant in English. For speakers of other dialects, select a practice word such as 'speak' spik. Begin with a lengthened s, followed by 'peak' pik: sssss pik, sssss pik. Gradually reduce the pause between the s and pik until they merge: sssspik. Then reduce the s gradually to normal length: spik 'speak'. Repeat this sequence with the other combinations if necessary.

Additional Drills and Games

When your students have gained some control over the problem sounds and sound combinations, you will want to have further practice -- in both hearing and speaking -- to "fix" their newly acquired skills. The exercises and games described below are designed to provide this practice.

Memorization: Children love to memorize rhymes, jokes, songs. Select a joke or rhyme containing the problem sound, and have the children

memorize it. Each repetition will involve practicing the problem sound.

Using Pictures: Select simple drawings or pictures of objects whose names contain the problem sounds; when you drill the children in naming the objects, they will be practicing the sound.

Picture Stories: Select from a story some words which contain the problem sounds, and which can be pictured easily. Draw the pictures on the blackboard, or otherwise provide the pictures. In telling the story, when you come to one of the pictured words, stop and point to the pictures and have the students supply the missing word.

Alphabetic Vocabulary: Select some topic, such as animals, food, things in the home. "It" calls out the name of a sound (or letter of alphabet) and points to a player. The player must say a word belonging to that topic which begins with the indicated sound or letter before "It" counts to ten.

This game can be varied by requiring that the indicated sound end the response word. Also, the number of letters that "It" may use may be limited to a few of the problem sounds.

Matching Rhymes: In a similar game,"It" names a word and points to a player, and the player must name a rhyming word, or say "There is none" before "It" counts to ten. If the player says "There is none", then "It" must name one before the player counts to ten. Whoever fails is "It".

This can be varied by requiring only that certain sounds be matched, like the initial or final consonant, or vowel.

The Grammars of English and Choctaw

When we speak of the "grammar" of a language, we mean the rules that govern the construction of sentences in that language. By "rules" we don't mean explicitly formulated statements, but principles which are learned unconsciously, such as the principle of changing a statement into a question, or changing an active sentence into a passive sentence. As children, we all have learned the grammatical rules of some dialect of English simply by exposure to examples and mimicry, with very little actual "explanation" of rules.

When we compare the grammars of English and Choctaw, we find in general four types of rules:

(1) Rules that are very similar in English and Choctaw, such as rules to indicate time of an action by tense in verbs.

(2) Rules that are slightly different. For example both English and Choctaw have a rule for changing a statement into a question, but the English rule is different from the Choctaw. To change "John is going" into a yes-no question, we move the auxiliary verb is to the left of the subject, and change the intonation of the sentence from a final fall to a final rise: "Is John going?"
But compare the corresponding statement and question in Choctaw

John at kaniiyah.

John at kaniiyah on?

Evidently the yes-no question rule for Choctaw does not change the order of any words, but rather adds the question particle on to the end of the sentence, and also modifies the intonation.

(3) Rules of English that have no counterpart in Choctaw. As an example, take the rule in English which adds an ending to a noun when the noun designates more than one individual; compare tree trees, pick picks, house houses, also nouns which change vowels like man men, goose geese. Choctaw has no such rule; a Choctaw noun can designate either one or several objects without change in form: iti 'tree' or 'trees', hattak 'man' or 'men'.

(4) Rules of Choctaw with no counterpart in English. An example is the rule which adds a prefix to a verb to tell the person and number of the direct object. If the object is ano 'me', the prefix is sa-; if the object is chishno 'you', the prefix is chi-, etc. In the examples below, the ano following the pronouns is the article 'a' which is always used with pronouns.

ano ano satakchi	'to tie me'
chishno ano chitakchi	'to tie you'
pishno ano pitakchi	'to tie us'
hachishno ano hachitakchi	'to tie you all'

The importance of this is that to teach a Choctaw speaker English, we will have to concentrate on rules of types (2) and (3), but not of types (1), which are very similar to rules he already knows, or (4), which are irrelevant. In fact, we may have to teach him not to use type (4) rules in English. Type (2) rules will generate difficulties, since the Choctaw rule will interfere with the English rule. Type (3) rules will generate difficulties, since something completely new must be learned.

When we speak of teaching rules, we don't mean that we formulate the rules explicitly and have our students memorize them. We mean simply that we provide them with examples of English sentences incorporating the rules, and drills incorporating the rules, so that the students through practicing and imitation can learn the rules unconsciously. An explicit explanation of the rule is sometimes helpful, but the important thing is to provide useful examples and practice.

The following discussion has two parts. The first part is a plan for beginning English instruction for children who know little or no English. It provides a method for starting from scratch, even if the teacher knows no Choctaw. The second part discusses some of the specific rules that must be taught, where interference is known to occur or can be expected. The drills described for overcoming these difficulties may be more appropriate for use with older children who already know some English.

Teaching the Trouble Spots

In this section we discuss specific sections of English grammar which are likely to be especially troublesome to Choctaw speakers because they involve grammatical rules which are totally absent in Choctaw, or they involve grammatical rules which are similar to Choctaw rules but not identical. The organization is by part of speech (noun, pronoun and article, verb, adjective). Exercises for teaching these trouble spots are provided. The helping verb do is also discussed.

Nouns - The Plural

English nouns have two forms to show number, a singular and a plural. Choctaw nouns do not show number. They have only one form; the difference between singular and plural is shown in other ways, as in the verb. In the following examples, hattak mat is literally 'man that', i.e. 'that man'; and when present, the enclitic -tok is the recent past tense marker.

hattak mat iya tok. 'That man went.'
hattak mat aɬkooli tok. 'Those men went.'

hattak mat binínli. 'That man is sitting.'
hattak mat binohmánya. 'Those men are sitting.'

Notice that hattak mat means either 'that man' or 'those men', but it doesn't change form as man does in English. Instead, one can use a plural verb form with some verbs to indicate that the subject is plural.

Learning the correct form of the English plural will be difficult for the Choctaw speaker.

We are concerned here with the spoken form of the plural, not the written form. The rules for spelling the plural must be learned separately, as they do not always correspond to the rules for the spoken forms.

For our purposes, there are five forms of the noun plural. They are as follows:

(1) The ending is -əz after s, sh, z, zh, ch, j.

nose	noses
dish	dishes
church	churches
judge	judges
horse	horses
garage	garages

One of these words changes its final s to z.

house	houses

(2) The ending is -z after other voiced sounds.

bee	bees
cab	cabs
king	kings
dove	doves

Some of these words ending in f change the f to v and add the the z ending accordingly.

thief	thieves
wife	wives
calf	calves
knife	knives

Also half, leaf, life, loaf, shelf, wolf, sheaf.

A very few words change final voiceless θ to voiced ð and add -z accordingly. Two of these are:

bath	baths
mouth	mouths

(3) The ending is -s after other voiceless sounds.

cap	caps
hat	hats
cliff	cliffs

Notice how the spelling rules hide the differences in pronunciation of the plural -s.

(4) Some nouns, such as the following, have irregular plurals.

man	men
child	children
woman	women
foot	feet
tooth	teeth
mouse	mice

(5) A very few nouns are the same in the singular and plural.

sheep	sheep
deer	deer

Explain the rules for the regular nouns with examples (the nouns of the first three classes, except those that change f and th). To drill on the plurals, give a singular or plural form, and have the class respond with the other form. Gradually add the less regular nouns, with an explanation.

This drill can be used as a game. "It" points to another player and says a noun in a sentence, "I see a dog", for example. The player must respond with the plural, in this case "I see some dogs", before "It" counts to ten. If the player fails, he becomes "It".

Nouns - The Possessive Ending

Nouns in English can take an ending to indicate possession, like the -z ending on man when you say "the man's coat".

There is no similar ending in Choctaw. Instead the noun or pronoun designating the possessor is placed in front of the other noun, and this other noun takes a prefix to indicate the person and number of the possessor:

chokka	'house'
hattak inchokka	'the man's house'
ano ano anchokka	'my house'
chishno ano chinchokka	'your house'
anchokka	'my house' (deletion of emphatic pronoun)

The English possessive ending has the same three forms as the English plural ending of the first three classes, except that f and th do not change. This ending is absent if the plural ending is on the noun, as illustrated by these examples:

man	'man's'
men	'men's'
boy	'boy's'
boys	'boys''

Notice again how the single spelling 's hides the differences in pronunciation.

Demonstrate the different forms of the possessive ending, with examples. Drill by giving a word, either singular or plural, and having the class respond with the correct form of the possessive.

A substitution drill can give additional practice. Give a word, and have the class place it in a sentence with the correct possessive ending. Do a few lines of the drill to demonstrate to the class what they are to do.

Teacher	Class
This is the man's home.	This is the man's home.
dog	This is the dog's home.
sheep	This is the sheep's home.
horses	This is the horses' home.
	etc.

A second drill involves changing one sentence into another.

Teacher	Class
The man has a horse.	This is the man's horse.
The boys have a car.	This is the boy's car.
The bush has a leaf.	This is the bush's leaf.
	etc.

The same type of game can be made from this drill, where "It" takes the place of "Teacher", and the player pointed to is "Class".

Pronouns - Gender

In the third person singular English has three different forms to distinguish gender, namely, he for masculine, she for feminine, it for neuter. English does not make this distinction for any other person or number. There is only one form for the third person plural, they. Since basically Choctaw does not use pronouns for the third person, Choctaw speakers will have trouble distinguishing among the third person forms used in English. For emphasis one can add mano, 'that one' or 'those' in Choctaw, but even here the same form is used for all third persons. Notice these examples:

mano takchi	'to tie him (her, it, them)'
takchi	'to tie him (her, etc.)'
mano inchokka	'his house (her house, etc.)'
inchokka	'his house (her house, etc.)'

The pronoun they when used as subject is partially accounted for by the particle okla. This particle comes right before the verb to indicate a plural subject; hence it can be used with we and you all as well as for they. Its use is optional.

Teach the use of he, she, and it. A simple drill is to give your class a sentence with one or more nouns in it, and have them respond with the correct pronouns in place of the nouns.

Teacher	Class
The man is here.	He is here.
The goat is here.	It is here. (etc.)

Pronouns - Case

English pronouns have different forms for nominative, objective

and possessive cases. Choctaw pronouns have only a single form; case is indicated in other ways.

As was explained previously, the pronoun is deleted unless it is emphatic. If it is left in the sentence, it is followed by the indefinite article a-. Now, case is indicated by putting a -t on the article for nominative case, and an -n for objective case. Finally, an emphatic -o is added.

chishno ato	'you' (nominative)
chishno ano	'you' (objective)

The nominative forms are taught by the drill in the preceding exercise, at least for the third person, which is the most difficult. Use the same exercise to teach the objective forms.

Teach the correct possessive forms my, your, his, her, its, our, your-alls, their with the same kind of drill that was used to teach the possessive form of nouns.

Pronouns - Number

The two forms (singular and plural) of the English demonstrative articles pose a learning problem for the Choctaw speaker, since the Choctaw demonstratives have a single form.

To teach the correct form of the demonstratives this/these and that/those, use a substitution drill in which the students must substitute a noun into a sentence and at the same time change the article.

Teacher	Class
I've seen this horse.	I've seen this horse.
men	I've seen these men.
trees	I've seen these trees.
dog	I've seen this dog.
	etc.

Use a similar drill with that/those.

The Verb - Tense

Choctaw has a system of tenses very similar to that of English. So the meaning of the English tenses is not new to speakers of Choctaw. The forms of the English tenses are new, however, since Choctaw changes tense by adding one of a number of words after the verb, while English adds endings to the verb and/or adds helping verbs in front of the verb.

onnaha impa tok.	'He ate breakfast.'
tobookoli impa.	'He eats lunch.'
okbiya ka impa aachin.	'He will eat dinner.'
onnaha impash antta tok.	'He was eating breakfast.'
tobookoli impash antta.	'He is eating lunch.'
okbiya ka impash antta aachin.	'He will be eating dinner.'

In these examples, tok is the recent past tense enclitic, and aachin is the future tense enclitic. The verb antta normally means 'to be there', but is used to form a periphrastic progressive conjugation.

The forms of the verbs which are used to form the tenses are the present form, the past form, the past participle, and the present participle (the -ing form). The past and past participle forms are often irregular, and will require special drills.

The verbs fall into several classes according to how the past and past participle are derived from the present form. One classification is given below; it follows pronunciation rather than spelling. If only two forms are given, the second is both the past and past participle.

(1) Most verbs add a suffix spelled -ed. This suffix has three different pronunciations.

a. It is -əd after t or d.

end	ended
rest	rested

b. It is -d after other voiced sounds.

call	called
cry	cried
lean	leaned
buzz	buzzed

c. It is -t after other voiceless sounds.

lock	locked
hop	hopped
wish	wished
kiss	kissed

(2) Some verbs add -d and change a vowel or consonant.

say	said
hear	heard

sell	sold
tell	told
have	had
make	made

(3) Some verbs add -t and drop off a -d.

bend	bent
send	sent
spend	spent
build	built

(4) Some add -t, change the vowel, and change v to f and z to s.

deal	dealt
feel	felt
mean	meant
keep	kept
sleep	slept
leave	left
lose	lost

(5) Some verbs add -t and make an irregular change in the root.

bring	brought
think	thought
teach	taught
catch	caught
buy	bought

(6) Some verbs don't change at all: hit, spread, cast, cost, cut, hurt, let, set, shut, split, slit.

(7) Some verbs change the vowel for the second form, but add no ending.

bleed	bled
light	lit
shoot	shot
fight	fought
find	found
hold	held
stand	stood
get	got
win	won

sting	stung
hang	hung
dig	dug
	etc.

(8) Others have three forms, all formed by vowel change. Some of these have -n or -en on the third form.

swim	swam	swum
ring	rang	rung
drive	drove	driven
swear	swore	sworn

The verbs in this group can be found in any standard English textbook.

(9) Finally there are the irregular verbs

be, am, are, is	was, were	been
go	went	gone

Most school workbooks in English have exercises for practice with the forms of verbs. These can be of some help in correcting the speech of a non-native speaker of English. However, they are designed mainly with the written language in mind. In addition, what is acceptable in some areas is unacceptable in others. Your students should learn the forms acceptable for educated speakers in the area in which they live.

A series of exercises is needed to teach so complex a topic. To begin with, use a substitution drill like the following to teach each of the numbered groups above.

Teacher	Class
The boy rested.	The boy rested.
nod	The boy nodded.
call	The boy called.
cough	The boy coughed.
	etc.

A second exercise is one in which you give a sentence in the present tense, and the class changes it to some other tense, such as the past, as in the following example.

Teacher	Class
I say so.	I said so.
He hears them.	He heard them.
She is making a cake.	She made a cake.
He is writing a letter.	He wrote a letter.
	etc.

When the class can do the drills with each of the numbered classes of verbs, begin to mix the classes up in the same exercise, as was done in the previous example.

Another exercise is to give a sentence in any tense, and a time expression. The class is to add the time expression to the sentence, changing the tense in the appropriate way.

Teacher	Class
The boy will sing. yesterday	The boy sang yesterday.
I rode a horse. now	I'm riding a horse now.
I am swimming. tomorrow	I am going to swim tomorrow.
	etc.

Verbs - The Present Tense

The third person singular form of the present tense verb normally ends in an -s which has three pronounced forms -əz, -z, -s like the possessive suffix of the noun. These can be taught with a substitution drill, changing the verb.

Teacher	Class
He misses his dog.	He misses his dog.
see	He sees his dog.
pet	He pets his dog.
call	He calls his dog.
	etc.

Or keep the same verb and change the subject from I to we or you, he, she, it; this will emphasize the fact that the -s goes only with he, she, it.

A few verbs have irregular present tenses. These are:

do	does
say	says
have	has

and am, are is

To teach these, construct a drill with substitution of the subject for each verb:

Teacher	Class
I am here.	I am here.
he	He is here.
you all	You all are here.
it	It is here.
we	We are here. etc.
or I am running.	I am running.
he	He is running.
we	We are running.
	etc.

Adjectives - Comparison

Unlike English adjectives, Choctaw adjectives do not have special forms for the comparative and superlative degrees. They express the same ideas in other ways. This will be a trouble spot in learning English.

The comparative is formed by adding -ər to words of one syllable, and a few two syllable words. Longer words take more. The superlative is similarly formed, with the...-est or the most.

small	smaller
thin	thinner
free	freer
simple	simpler
strong	stronger
pretty	prettier
narrow	narrower
difficult	more difficult
expensive	more expensive

To drill on the use of the comparative, have your students substitute adjectives into sentences.

Teacher	Class
John is taller than Bill.	John is taller than Bill.
short	John is shorter than Bill.
intelligent	John is more intelligent than Bill.
	etc.

Or try a drill like the following, which requires the students to construct the whole comparative phrase more+Adjective+than.

Teacher	Class
This word is difficult. That word	This word is more difficult than that word.
She is pretty. Sue	She is prettier than Sue.
She is beautiful. Sue	She is more beautiful than Sue.
This job is difficult. That job	This job is more difficult than that job.
	etc.

Use the same kinds of drills to practice the superlative:

Teacher	Class
John is the tallest.	John is the tallest.
short	John is the shortest.
	etc.
This word is difficult. the words	This word is the most difficult of the words.
Sue is pretty. The girls	Sue is the prettiest of the girls.
She is pretty. Sue	She is as pretty as Sue.
	etc.

Special attention will have to be given such irregular adjectives as good better best, much more most, many more most, far farther farthest, bad worse worst.

The comparison of adverbs is very similar to that of adjectives; you can easily design drills to teach the patterns of its uses.

Sentence Patterns - Emphatic Do

In Choctaw, when one wants to emphasize a word, he may stress the word, as we do in English, but he is more likely to add one of a number of special particles after it. If he wants to stress the truth of a sentence, he will add hoke to the end of it.

The English pattern for stressing the truth of a sentence is more complex. If a verb phrase begins with a form of be, or have used as a helping verb, this word is stressed.

He is big.

He is going.

He was going.

He has gone.

He will go.

Otherwise -- that is, if the verb phrase begins with the main verb, or have in the sense of "to own" -- do is inserted in the appropriate tense and stressed:

He went.	He did go
He goes every day.	He does go every day.
He has a book.	He does have a book.

Thus, there are two forms for stressing an English sentence.

One drill to use is to give the unemphatic, and have your students give the emphatic. At first, practice the two types of emphatic sentences separately. Then mix them.

Teacher	Class
The man will come.	The man will come.
The boy is singing	The boy is singing.
It has rained.	It has rained.
The man came.	The man did come.
He knows her.	He does know her.
I have a cat.	I do have a cat.
It snows in winter	It does snow in winter.
He thought she left.	He did think she left.

Sentence Patterns - Negative Do

To make a negative statement in Choctaw, one either adds kiyo 'not' after the verb, or prefixes ik- (or a parallel form depending on the person of the subject) and suffixes -o, or both. For example:

minti.	He is coming.
minti kiyo.	He is not coming.
ikminto.	He is not coming
ikminto kiyo.	He is not coming.

In English, the helping verb do is used when not is inserted in a sentence. If the verb phrase contains a helping verb, or a form of be, then not is placed after it, and a contraction usually occurs.

He isn't big.

He isn't going.

He wasn't going.

He hasn't gone.

He won't go.

If the first verb is the main verb, do is inserted, and not is placed after do.

He went	He didn't go.
He goes every day.	He doesn't go every day.
He has a book.	He doesn't have a book.

Use the same drills as for emphatic do, but responses will be:

The man won't come.

The boy isn't singing.

The man didn't come.

I don't have a cat.

Sentence Patterns - Yes-No Questions and Interrogative Do.

To change a statement into a yes-no question in Choctaw, one adds the particle hon or on to the end of the sentence. This particle is accompanied by a low and rising pitch. For example:

minti.	He is coming
minti hon?	Is he coming?
pisa tok.	He saw it.
pisa tok on?	Did he see it?

Questions in English involve placing the first helping verb in front of the subject.

Is he big?

Is he going?

Has he gone?

Will he go?

But if the sentence does not have a helping verb, then do is inserted and put in front of the subject.

He went.	Did he go?
He goes every day.	Does he go every day?
He has a book.	Does he have a book?

The same kind of exercise can be used to teach interrogative do as is used to teach the other forms of do, except that the class

responses will be the appropriate questions.

Sentence Patterns - Information Questions

Information questions in Choctaw, like yes-no questions, have the interrogative particle hon or on, and in addition, one of the interrogative pronouns: kata 'who', nanta 'what' katimma 'where', etc. Unlike English, the Choctaw interrogative word is not moved to the front of the sentence:

hattak mat ohooyo man pisa tok.	That man saw that woman.
kata hosh ohooyo man pisa tok on?	Who saw that woman?
hattak mat kata hon pisa tok on?	Who did that man see?

[hattak 'man', ohooyo 'woman', pisa 'see', tok 'past tense', mat 'that (nominative case)', man 'that (objective case)'. Notice that the interrogative word kata is also followed by the interrogative particle, with hosh as the nominative form.]

Information questions in English have in addition to do or the helping verb an interrogative word (who, what, where, why, etc.) which is placed in front of the helping verb or form of do; if the interrogative word is the subject, there is no do.

He is big.	Who is big?
He is going.	Who is going?
He saw her.	Who saw her?
	Who did he see?
He has a book.	Who has a book?
	What does he have?
He went to school.	Who went to school?
	Where did he go?

To drill on information questions, when the question word is not the subject, give a sentence, and name a word to change to a question.

Teacher	Class
He has a book.	Who has a book?
He saw the girl.	Who saw the girl?

Conclusion

What we have been able to cover in this brief article is only a beginning. We have focused only on the aspects of English that present the most serious difficulties for a learner whose first language is Choctaw. We hope these bits of advice and aid will be of actual use to

teachers in the classroom. Much more importantly, we hope that having read this article, and the exercises and explanations, you will have learned about the general approach to teaching English as a foreign language; and that you will be able to use this knowledge to design additional exercises and drills to use in the classroom as you see the need for them.

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